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# THE BAPTIST Record

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## WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Dealing with abortion



Church excels at LMCO



Letters to the editor



Sunday School lessons



## Baptist leader helps inaugurate president

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Gregory Kommendant, the president of Ukraine Baptist Union, made history Nov. 30 when he delivered a message on behalf of all Christian groups at the invitation of Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma at Kuchma's inauguration.

It was the first time in the history of Ukraine that a Baptist leader was asked to participate in such an important government function.

Mississippi Baptists are in the midst of a six-year partnership missions project with the Ukraine Baptist Union, and the symbolism of Kommendant's participation bodes well for Baptist work in the former Soviet state.

Ukraine became an independent democracy in 1991.

Kuchma was reelected to a new five-year term in a run-off election on Nov. 14. He defeated communist candidate Petro Symonenko, receiving 56.25% of the vote.

According to June Nolen, who along with husband Thomas serves as on-site coordinators for the Mississippi Baptist partnership with Ukraine Baptists, Kommendant's message described The Heart of a King.

Kommendant wished the president and his family good health and assured him that he personally had the president in his heart. On behalf of all the Christian groups in Ukraine, Kommendant reported to Kuchma that the churches of Ukraine supported him and his



Kommendant

democratic government.

Kommendant also told the president that many brothers and sisters in Christ in the United States were praying for him.

At the time the invitation was issued, Kommendant was visiting the U.S. He quickly returned for the occasion.

In another unprecedented action, Kuchma took the oath of office with his hand not only on a copy of the nation's constitution, but also on a 16th-century copy of the New Testament. A brief discussion took place over where to open the Bible when Kuchma placed his hand upon it; John 3:16 was chosen.

In his address, Kuchma declared the year 2000 as a year of celebration of Christianity. A

large event in the Hall of the President is planned for January 14 to kick off the celebration.

Kuchma stated he had heard many good things about the Christian work in Ukraine, and he knew that Baptists did many charitable acts of kindness. Kuchma thanked Kommendant for the benevolence of Baptist groups.

According to Nolen, this is a critical time in the life of the Ukraine.

"This country has a long history of oppression. Ukrainian Baptists have asked us (Miss. Baptists) to meet critical needs, such as rebuilding churches that were destroyed, and starting new churches in areas that have not heard the Gospel in generations," she said.

"This is a very exciting time to be involved in Ukraine. God has placed Mississippi Baptists; one of the strongest states in terms of a heart for missions, in a position to minister during a time when the door has never before been so wide open," she said.

Since independence, the economy in Ukraine has struggled. Average income in Ukraine is about \$36 a month, and this average has dropped every year since independence in 1991, she pointed out.

"People need a sense of hope. We can give them the hope that comes from faith in God through Jesus Christ," Nolen stressed.

As on-site coordinators, the Nolens meet at the airport the groups who come as part of the Mississippi partnership effort.

"We take them to the field, make assignments, keep up with them, support them during the week, and get them back on a plane," she said.

Nolen said coming to Ukraine is a two-way experience.

"It is not just what Mississippians are doing for Ukrainian Baptists, but what the Ukrainians are doing for Mississippi Baptists. It is a life-changing experience."

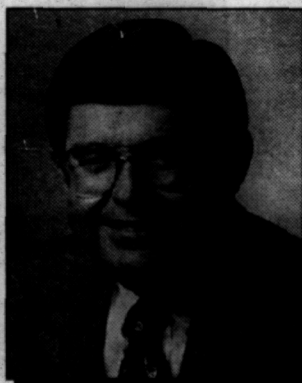
For more information on the Mississippi/Ukraine Baptist partnership and other partnership missions opportunities, contact Paul Harrell, director of partnership missions, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

## 'Spirit-empowered' conference set for Jan. 21-22

By Sonny Adkins, director  
Evangelism Department

January 21-22 are the dates of the most spirit-led and empowered event in Mississippi for the year 2000. This is the date of our Evangelism Conference to be held at Ridgecrest Church in Madison. This is going to be a great Friday and Saturday for our Lord Jesus and Mississippi Baptists. Your entire church is invited to participate in this first Mississippi Baptist Convention-sponsored conference of the new millennium.

Ed Deuschle has planned two outstanding Interfaith Evangelism



Adkins

Conferences that should interest all of us. On Thursday, Jan. 20, Phil Roberts of North American Mission Board will teach on The Mormon Puzzle from 7-9 p.m. at Ridgecrest Church. On Friday, Jan. 21, from 8:45-11:45 a.m., Christian Answers for the New Age will be provided. These Interfaith Conferences are for you and your people.

Our state evangelism conference begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 21, at Ridgecrest Church. Great servants of God will lead us in worship and praise as we Lift High the Cross. The presence of you and your people is critical to the success of this program. To attend the evangelism conference is to receive a blessing from God and to be absent from the conference is to miss God and what he wants to give you.

A presentation of "God For Us" is scheduled for 2 p.m. at the Mississippi Coliseum in downtown Jackson on Saturday, Jan. 22. Our own Graham Smith, director of the Church Music Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be directing about 3,000 singers representing over 100 Mississippi choirs. They will be accompanied by a more than 150-piece orchestra. An invitation will be given and what a climax to "Lifting High the Cross"!

Your promotion and presence are vital to the success of the evangelism conference. I look forward to seeing you at Ridgecrest Church on Jan. 20-22 and the Mississippi Coliseum at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 22. *Philippians 1:3*



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# The cretins among us

It's difficult to overlook the evidence that we are entering a post-Christian era in what was once the greatest Christian nation in the world.

We haven't yet been thrown to the lions (at least in America), but Christians and the ideals by which we live are being confronted by an increasingly hostile, hedonistic culture in which absolutely anything goes.

Somewhere along the way we obviously exchanged the wisdom of our forefathers, as epitomized in the phrase, "In God we trust," to a version more relevant to the rebellious lifestyle we live today: "In ourselves only we trust."

That's really one of the focal messages of our culture. Throw out the moral anchors and spiritual guideposts of traditional Christianity, and there is nothing left on which to rely except ourselves.

We have come to believe that we can make our own decisions apart from any higher power, because there is no higher power than the individual.

It is under such delusion that infanticide becomes "reproductive health," adultery becomes merely an "inappropriate relationship," and sexual perversions become "alternate lifestyles."

It should be expected that Christians in a post-Christian world will be brought to task for living our faith and calling sin what it truly is, even when we do so in a peaceful and unthreatening manner.

It is in such a world that a self-constituted group of religious leaders in Chicago recently made a very public appeal for Southern Baptists to give up organized attempts to witness to lost people in their area, for fear of inciting "faith-based terrorist violence."

It is in such a world that the U.S. President's press secretary, Joe Lockhart, observed a few days ago that Southern Baptist efforts to evangelize lost people

such as Muslims and Buddhists "perpetuate ancient religious hatred." (Lockhart has since apologized and admitted that his statement was made out of ignorance.)

It is in such a world that nationally-syndicated newspaper columnist Sandy Grady feels free to criticize presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore for publicly admitting they are born-again Christians and that Jesus has made a difference in their lives.

Describing such professions of faith as "Jesus bombast" and "noisy pulpiteering," Grady sarcastically complained, "For a confused moment, I thought I was back at the Wednesday night prayer meetings of childhood."

You caught his implied message, didn't you? To Grady and cultural elitists like him, religion — and specifically Christianity — are apparently nothing more than the domain of the childish and immature.

One can almost hear him and many others in the national news and entertainment media suggesting that such unsophisticates aren't intellectually worthy to govern this great, secular country.

Christians who understand our true mission as found in Matt. 28:18-20 should be energized by such criticism, keeping in mind that the word cretin, which the dictionary defines as, "a kind of idiot..." was

"SIR, WHILE YOUR WIFE FINISHES HER SHOPPING, PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET READY TO DIE!"



originally a French play on the word Christian and was coined to criticize the early believers in Europe.

Sadly, the world still considers us idiots for Christ, but we should wear their disdain as a badge of honor. Jesus, the ultimate cultural non-conformist, was plain-spoken about the cost of the world's disapproval toward those who follow him.

There is a lot of criticism to be absorbed in this post-Christian world, but there are also a lot of people who need to hear about the Savior.

Fellow cretins, let's roll up our sleeves and get busy!

## GUEST OPINION:



### Abortion and the national mindset

By Michael Weeks, pastor  
Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch

Life has value. Seems this statement would be indisputable, but unfortunately even in some Christian circles not everyone agrees. Part of our society has adopted a mindset which says, "Life is not valuable."

Some activist groups and court decisions have diminished society's opinion of life. *Doe v. Bolton* and *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion. States continue to discuss and legislate doctor assisted suicide. Society is encouraged to be "open minded" regarding such issues.

Producers of movies and music defend their right to sell products which glorify killing, suicide, and even death. One such movie depicts a student walking into his classroom wearing a trench coat and firing a shotgun at his classmates.

We live in a society which seeks to play with words in order to disguise the truth. Abortion is called "a woman's right." Doctor-assisted suicide is called "death with dignity."

Is it any wonder people are confused about the value of life?

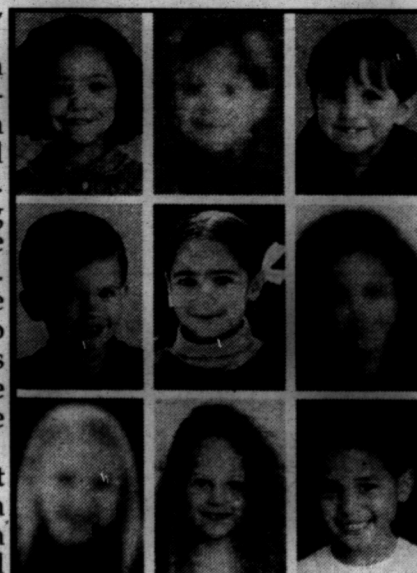
In the past few years, the media has made us aware of many school shootings across America. People ask why these events occur. What would possess someone to become a killer? The reasons cited include Satanism, demon possession,

video games, movies, lyrics of songs, revenge, etc.

We have seen our culture progressively spin in a downward cycle of values. Right and wrong have become distorted. Uncontrollable anger seems to feed actions which have stunned the world.

Innocent men, women and children have suffered and died at the hands of angry and frustrated individuals.

Children are exposed to the



Sanctity of  
Human Life Sunday

desensitization of human life in video games. While playing the games, rewards are given for the number of people or creatures killed.

In some games, the player is rewarded more points according to the method of killing, such as a shot to the head, a bomb, or some other murderous technique.

The sanctity of human life is not just an abortion or euthanasia issue. It is an attitude of the heart.

It places value on human life. No matter the issue, the life of an individual is valuable.

I know many of you reading this article are Christians. You may be saying, "My family is okay. I don't have anything to worry about."

What about your children's circle of friends? Do they have the same values as your children? Are your children easily led astray? Have you discussed the value of life with your children?

We live in a self-centered society which says, "Do unto others before they do it to you," and, "The only one who counts is you." Unfortunately, people do not realize how their choices affect the lives of others.

It is my prayer that people will stop practicing a cultural Christianity which adopts the cultural values of the day. To ignore the clear principles of God's Word such as, "You shall not murder," positions a person on a collision course with God.

May we follow an authentic biblical faith which stands firm on God's Word. We are to present the moral precepts of God's Word to a world which is aimlessly existing without purpose.

We must become alert, informed, and share God's message of hope. Failure to do so means we consent to the evil around us.



# Global gospel strategies subject of summit

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Southern Baptist pastors and lay people from about 275 churches embraced a challenge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth during "The Summit for the New Millennium" Dec. 14-16 at Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.

The summit — a global missions networking conference sponsored by Nashville's Two Rivers Church — linked more than 550 pastors and laypeople with about 160 missionary strategy coordinators targeting unreached people groups in The Last Frontier, the part of the world where people have little or no access to the gospel.

"The whole purpose of the summit was to put tools in the hands of churches, to say this is how you can connect and be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission during the next millennium," said Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers and organizer of the conference.

During most of the summit, teams of church representatives and strategy coordinators met in small-group sessions, in which they discussed and prayed about how churches could help missionaries implement strategies for taking the gospel to unreached people groups.

Participants also heard challenges from several Southern Baptist missions leaders, who reminded them that the entire body of Christ is responsible for obeying the Great Commission.

"As we look at the literally millions of people to be reached, we must realize that a handful of missionaries and

strategy coordinators can't get the job done alone," International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin said during the summit's opening banquet.

"I've often said it's not the responsibility of the

Sutton, in a missions sermon, said, "This is the first time in the history of the world where the technology is in place to take the gospel to every unreached people group, every nation, in this world. For the first time in history the pieces of the puzzle are all together, but the question is this: Will we do what Jesus has told us to do?"

During the summit, participants also heard from missionary strategy coordinators of the International Mission Board (IMB) who told of God at work in amazing ways to draw the world's unreached people to himself. Missionaries urged church representatives to take a "vision trip" to The Last Frontier to see for themselves how God is moving there.

"If you want to see the power of God, like you've only read about in books and wondered what it would be like to be there, then you come on," said a strategy coordinator working among a responsive people group in former Soviet Central Asia.

At meeting room tables and in hallway conversations, participants sensed God was at work during the summit, too. "There were just so many divine appointments," observed Bill Bullington, the IMB's vice president for overseas services, who coordinated the board's involvement in the event.

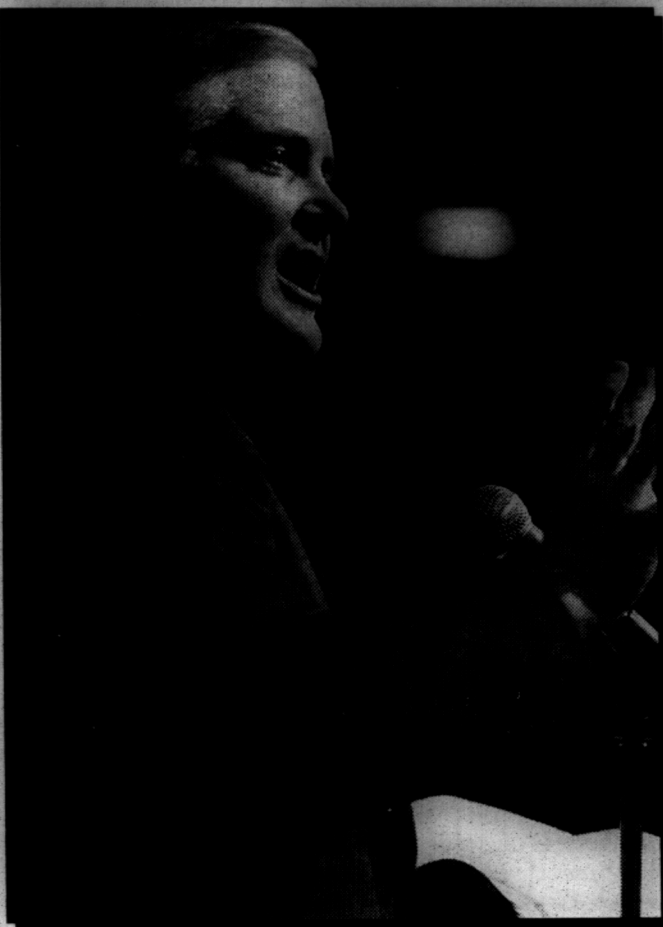
One of those appointments happened to strategy coordinator Frank Buck (name changed for security reasons), who is trying to evangelize an unreached people group in a restricted access country in North Africa.

"I knew that if God had his hand in this summit, great things would happen, but I guess I just wasn't expecting them to happen at my table,"

Buck admitted. "But God had been at work here, preparing the hearts of the pastors and lay people who attended."

In fact, all churches represented at Buck's table made commitments to get directly involved in taking the gospel to unreached people in the region.

A small mission congregation pledged to create Internet sites for missionary teams targeting 16 unreached people groups in the region. Another church volunteered to help recruit Southern Baptists to fill missionary personnel needs for the teams' work. And leaders from Gateway Church in Irmo, S.C., even offered to hire a full-time administrator to handle the extra workload created by the church's commitment to take the gospel to the region's



REACHING THE WORLD — During The Summit for the New Millennium in Nashville, Tenn., Jerry Sutton, pastor of Nashville's Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, urges Southern Baptist pastors and laymen to do their part in evangelizing the uttermost parts of the earth. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

International Mission Board to do missions on behalf of Southern Baptists. The Great Commission was given to every believer, every church, and every denominational entity. Our responsibility as a denominational missions agency is not to do missions on your behalf but to facilitate your being obedient to the Great Commission," Rankin said.

## Homosexual rights upheld

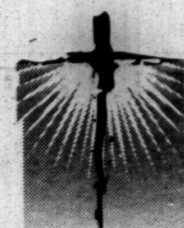
WASHINGTON (BP) — The Vermont Supreme Court handed a key victory to the homosexual rights movement Dec. 20 when it ruled same-sex partners should have the same benefits and protections now granted to heterosexual married couples.

In its unanimous decision, however, the court stopped short of legalizing homosexual marriage. It said the Vermont legislature must determine whether the ruling should be implemented by approving same-sex marriage or by establishing a domestic-partnership system.

Focus on the Family President James Dobson, who said the decision "violates common sense and the entire course of Western civilization" called for a similar response in Vermont.

Homosexual rights activists celebrated the Vermont opinion, which was based on the state constitution, not the federal one. Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign, called it a "historic, landmark decision." Mary Bonauto, co-counsel for the three same-sex couples who challenged a ban on homosexual marriage, described the ruling as a "legal and cultural milestone."

The Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in 1993 homosexual marriage would have to be permitted, but voters overwhelmingly approved in a referendum an amendment authorizing state lawmakers to limit marriages to heterosexual couples.



MISSISSIPPI  
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THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST  
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## Looking back

### 10 years ago

Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, calls for a solemn assembly to be held on Jan. 16 at Parkway Church, Jackson. This is an urgent call for people to come and humble themselves before God to fast and pray.

### 20 years ago

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, is one of seven "star preachers" identified by Time magazine from across the nation. The article on Pollard, the only Southern Baptist on the list, was written by Jackson Daily News religion editor Art Toalston.

### 50 years ago

Phil J. Walker, associational missionary for Warren County, will be the speaker on the Mississippi Radio Hour on Sunday, Jan. 15. He can be heard on Jackson radio stations WRBC and WSLI, Memphis radio station WHBQ, and Picayune radio station WRJW.



# Analysis: Women can be set free from abortion guilt

By Shelia Stanford, consultant  
Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

Ann LeVan grew up in Mississippi as a Baptist "preacher's kid." She was part of a loving Christian family. She was intelligent, attractive, and full of potential.



LeVan (left) and Robinson

Thirteen years ago, as an unmarried college graduate residing in Ohio, she experienced the trauma of abortion after choosing to end her unexpected pregnancy. Her story reminds us that the church and Christians are not immune to the devastation of abortion. Ann's journey from silent suffering to forgiveness and freedom is one she shares to give hope to others in similar situations.

Ann remained in Ohio and eventually married her boyfriend, to whom she is still married. However, she admits the first years of their marriage were very difficult. They did not discuss the abortion and never addressed the many issues involved with it. Ann was filled with self-hatred, guilt, and grief, yet she never talked about her feelings or her experience. Then in 1991, five years after her abortion, Ann heard a

crisis pregnancy counselor speak concerning "post-abortion syndrome." She realized her symptoms were exactly those the counselor described, and she finally recognized the wall of denial she had built years ago. It was as though a "light came on" and the blinders were removed. Ann discovered she had been suffering silently for years.

She began attending a Bible study for women who had experienced abortion and found the Word of God to bring the healing she desperately needed. The study was based on the book *Forgiven and Set Free* by Linda Cochrane, a woman who had herself been through several abortions and had later become a Christian.

Since 35 out of every 1,000 women of childbearing age in the United States have abortions each year, post-abortion syndrome is a reality that impacts the lives of women outside and inside the church. One out of six women sitting in the pews of Christian churches have had an abortion. The term "post-abortion syndrome" is used to describe a woman's inability to:

- ◆ process the fear, anger, sadness, and guilt surrounding her abortion experience.
  - ◆ grieve the loss of her baby.
  - ◆ come to peace with God, herself, and others involved in the abortion decision.
- An excellent informational pamphlet is available from Focus on the Family and is entitled "Identifying and Overcoming Post-Abortion Syndrome." Call (800) A-FAMILY to order this and other related material.

Susan Robinson is Ann's sister and a member of Raymond Church, Raymond. Like Ann, she felt God leading her to minister to women experiencing post-abortion syndrome. Susan was motivated by her sister's personal experience and also by a

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday School lesson, at her church two years ago. Susan started a *Forgiven and Set Free* Bible study and has led two sessions thus far involving eight women. Susan and Ann desire to help women find forgiveness, healing, and freedom from guilt and grief through the love and grace of Jesus Christ. They want women to know there are people who can help and who will listen.

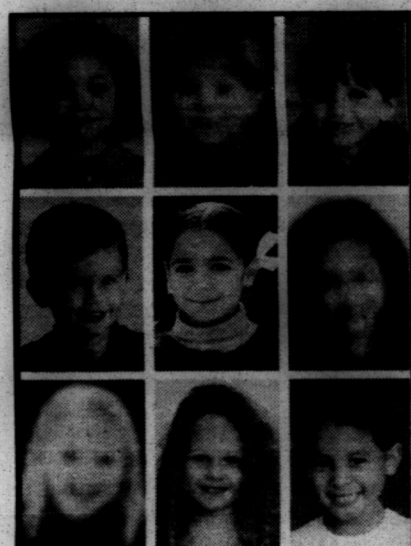
If you or someone you know has experienced anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, grief, anger, and/or relationship difficulties due to the experience of abortion, there is help available. Call Susan at (601) 857-8190. She will keep all calls confidential.

Perhaps you feel led by God to begin a ministry such as Susan's. She can give you information on the Bible study, further information on related issues, and details of other similar ministries in our state. The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention provides excellent books, pamphlets, and videos related to abortion issues and can be reached at (800) 475-9127.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission also has materials available to assist in this type of ministry and can be reached at (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson at (800) 748-1651.

Until we acknowledge that abortion is a real issue in our churches, many women will never find help and healing for their damaged lives. Our families, the church, and society will continue to suffer.

As our Sanctity of Human Life emphasis continues, may we be honest and bold enough to address the needs around us and to help make a difference in our world with the love of Christ. God's truth truly does set us free.



Sanctity of  
Human Life Sunday

## FIT OR FAT?

The results of a nationwide study were released in December announcing the cities in America that are the most "fit" and those cities where the people are the most "fat." The city where the people are supposedly in the best shape is San Diego, Calif., and the city that qualifies as the "couch potato" capital of America is Philadelphia, Pa. While I find the study intriguing, I am not sure of the purpose or positive results that might come from expenditure of thousands of dollars and many hours to discover such material.

One thing that is known and is again confirmed by this study is that Americans from coast to coast are considerably overweight. Another thing coming from this study that seems to be pointed out in all of these sorts of evaluations, is that we here in America eat too much and exercise too little. While the study dealt with a number of factors related to being "fit" or "fat," one of its limitations was the fact that it was focused only on the physical. I suppose the reason for that is that it is far more difficult to evaluate a person's mental health or spiritual condition.

While I am not conducting a national study related to spiritual health, it might do us good to at least take a personal survey of where we are in our "connectedness" with God.



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

How would you go about doing that? Well, there are diagnostic tools related to spirituality but here and there, in the privacy of your own heart, maybe just a few questions would help us see ourselves as to whether we are "fit" or "fat."

As space would allow, let me give you just a few of these questions:

◆ Do you love what God loves? The question is not, "Do you love God?" though that would be a valid and important issue. No, the question is, "Do you love the things and the people that God loves?"

Let me show you how probing this question is. Suppose you and I join a group sitting at the table with our Lord for the Last Supper. Suppose we were asked, "Do you love Jesus?" Well, for most of them and for most of us the answer would be a simple, "Sure!" — a rock-solid, "Yes!" But now think about this question being posed in that setting, "Do you love Judas?" Jesus did. In spite of the fact that Judas was sneaky, sinister, insincere, and would cheat, misrepresent, and undermine —

well, you get the picture!

How do you feel about Judas? As you examine your own spiritual condition, how we love others tells more about us than it does about them.

◆ Do you hate the things that God hates? God has and has given to us the capacity to hate. Our problem is basically twofold: 1) having the spiritual discernment to despise those things that God does, and 2) not to cross the line and hate those things about which God cares.

In the book of Job the Scripture says that Job loved God and hated evil. As you read the book of Job some interesting developments begin to take place that are common to each one of us, yet Job continues to stay focused on hating evil.

Let me explain: Life dumps one disaster after another in Job's roadway. It would be easy for Job to turn sour and begin hating life. Somehow in the ultimate scheme of things, God allowed those bad events to take place and it is true, had he wanted to, God could have stopped all that. Job could have

been bitter at God. Then Job's friends come and pin him to the wall with their assumptions of his wicked lifestyle. It would have been easy for Job to have ostracized his friends, but he didn't. Job recognized that evil, though he wasn't able to see or fully understand it, was at work and he hated that.

◆ Another diagnostic question that is worthy of consideration is related to our obedience: What do we do when God asks us to do something? I'm not talking about the vague, uncertain things that seem to perplex us as we search for the will of God, but what is our response when we know there is something we should or should not do?

While many of us may ultimately get around to answering the call and responding to his will, it is the delay or quiet, obstinate attitude that is harmful to the work of God. Sure, Jonah did what God asked him to do after ignoring his voice, going his own way, living through a storm, riding in the belly of a fish, and enduring whatever is involved in being vomited up on the shore. He then proceeded to be faithful to his calling.

It is hardly the model to be followed for spiritual vitality. There are so many needs, so many glorious opportunities, so many blessings to be enjoyed, that we all need to be "fit" for the New Year.

Are you "fit" or "fat?"



# Graham issues challenge to United Nations

NEW YORK CITY (BP) — Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham and his daughter Anne Graham Lotz spoke hours apart to different audiences of the United Nations.

Both occasions were sponsored by the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) ministry to the U.N. community.

At a dinner Dec. 15, Graham told 200 U.N. diplomats that as the world celebrates the dawn of the year 2000, a number of problems have not been solved because they require spiritual solutions.

"I salute all of you for your dedication and the work you do in the U.N.

... You serve in a great humanitarian organization, but the greatest problems that face us are spiritual in nature," he said. Graham named three with the first being human evil.

"Where does evil come from?" Graham queried. "Murder, rape, wars all over the world. We can't get along with other people. We're self destructive and violent. Few people know better than you how much evil is in the world. And, we all know the depth of evil within our own hearts."

"The Bible says the problem is within us. We need to have our souls restored. Out of the heart, the Bible says, come evil thoughts," he said.

Commending the U.N. for its



BILLY GRAHAM SPEAKS AT U.N. — Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham, left, is introduced by Robert E. Reccord, president of the SBC's North American Mission Board. Graham spoke to United Nations diplomats at a dinner meeting Dec. 15 in New York City sponsored by NAMB. (Photo by NAMB)

work with refugees and the impoverished around the world, Graham cited human suffering as the second unsolved world problem. "Troubles bear down on all of us. I've never met a person who didn't have something to be concerned about. Why we suffer is a spiritual question which can only be understood spiritually," he said.

Death, Graham told the diplomats from nearly 80 countries including Vietnam, North and South Korea, Libya, and Albania, is the third problem the world has not solved. "Death is the forbidden subject in our generation. Our culture

denies it. Some people live as if they are never going to die."

Graham made several references to his own mortality and declining health, the effects of which were evident as he made his way to and from the podium but virtually disappeared as he preached. "I'm writing a book on heaven, and I hope I can get it finished, because I'll be spending billions of years there with Jesus," he said.

Graham told of preaching the funeral of former U.S. President Richard Nixon before five U.S. presidents and a worldwide audience. The evangelist said he pointed to Nixon's casket and

said, "Every one of you will be there one of these days. Are you ready?" Looking at the U.N. diplomats, he said, "I ask myself that question, and I ask you: are you ready? In the midst of all you are doing around the world to alleviate suffering and bring about peace, I pray you will not starve your own soul."

He then shared briefly how he accepted Jesus Christ as a high school student. "At that time I didn't know much about God and religion. But all that I have done in my life I owe to Jesus Christ, for he has given me compassion for others — no matter what their race or religion."

Graham concluded his remarks with a story about Albert Einstein.

"Einstein was on a train coming to New York City but couldn't find his ticket. As the brilliant scientist frantically searched for his ticket, the train's conductor recognized him and assured Einstein it would not be necessary for him to find his ticket. Continuing to search, however, Einstein told the conductor, 'This is not an issue of trust, but of direction. Without that ticket, I have no idea where I am going.'"

Graham asked his audience if they were like Einstein, not knowing where they were going. He concluded by asking, "in the future, when you hear my name, would you give thought to your own final destination?"

## Fellowship announces nominees

ATLANTA (ABP) — A Virginia pastor will be nominated as the future top officer of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship when the group meets this summer.

Officials at the Atlanta-based Fellowship have announced that Jim Baucum, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Church in Lynchburg, Va., will be nominated moderator-elect at the Fellowship's June 29-July 1 General Assembly in Orlando, Fla.

The Fellowship will also elect a new recorder at next summer's General Assembly. Joel Snider, pastor of First Church in Rome, Ga., is being nominated for the post currently held by Carolyn Dipboye of Oakridge, Tenn. Dipboye has held the office three years.

In a staff change, former MissionsUSA editor Phyllis Thompson has been named associate communications coordinator for the Fellowship. She began work Dec. 28.

Thompson worked 20 years for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board), including 10 years as editor and managing editor of the agency's flagship magazine. For the past two years, she has worked as a freelance communications specialist.

## NAMB official cautions churches to be wary

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — When several members of a Georgia Baptist church were invited to attend a weekend of spiritual renewal, their pastor, Paul Mason, didn't give it a second thought. After all, "Tres Dias" (Spanish for three days) sounded like it was a normal, weekend getaway sponsored by a mainline religious denomination.

A few months after they returned from the retreat, Mason realized he had a problem on his hands at Central Church, Douglasville. "When I asked them how the retreat went, they told me it was a secret. They couldn't talk about what happened during the weekend," he said.

Mason noticed that couples who had attended the Tres Dias retreat were secretly inviting other couples to attend the program. After the church's Sunday School superintendent went to the retreat, he abruptly resigned his church position without reason. Within six months, Mason said the couples who had initially attended Tres Dias completely ostracized themselves from the congregation. The result, Mason said, was a divided church.

Determined to learn all he could about Tres Dias, Mason uncovered some unsettling information about a spiritual movement that is raising concern in the Southern Baptist Convention. Tres Dias is one of three major spiritual renewal movements that emerged from the Cursillo Movement.

Cursillo is a three-day learning, sharing experience of living in a Christian community or a short course in Christianity.

The Cursillo Movement originated in

the Roman Catholic Church. However, many of the current Cursillo Movements are run by Protestant denominations. The Three major movements in this country are Tres Dias, a charismatic movement with ties to the United Methodist Church (UMC); "The Emmaus Walk," sponsored by the UMC; and the Lutheran-affiliated "Via De Cristo."

The weekend retreats aren't just aimed at adults. Many Southern Baptist teenagers have attended the UMC's youth Cursillo called, "Chrysalis," and that has caused the North American Mission Board to sound a word of caution.

"If Southern Baptist teenagers want a deeper relationship with Christ, a three-day weekend is just a quick fix. These retreats often create more problems for a church than they resolve," said Tal Davis of NAMB's interfaith witness team.

Mason agreed. "The Emmaus Walk and Chrysalis were adopted and adapted to fit the Methodist denomination and it works well for them. I make my strongest appeal that Baptist teenagers should receive their spiritual training through Southern Baptist organizations," he said.

Davis said a number of Southern Baptist churches have contacted his office with stories of problems resulting from the retreats. "It's very strange. Some church members have done extreme things, selling possessions, becoming secretive. It's almost like the weekend retreat has become the focus of their spiritual lives."

George Osment, a lay leader at First Baptist Church, Scottsboro, Tenn., said the spiritual intensity is so great that leaders of one Tres Dias retreat refused to allow a camper to leave. "This person wanted to go home but they wouldn't let him. He saw what was going on and wanted to leave," Osment said. "They formed a circle around him and prayed over him."

Osment said the secrecy surrounding the retreat has caused division in their congregation. "It's very sad," he said.

Said Davis: "Anything that involves a measure of secrecy sends up a red flag. There's no need for anybody in a Christian church to keep anything secret. Everything should be out in the open."

Davis said the Cursillo movement is intent on getting as many people out of the church to attend as possible. "There is an elitist mind-set and that can become divisive. It's a problem," he said.

And while Davis stressed that he doesn't believe the Cursillo movement intentionally tries to undermine the local church pastor, he warned that even some pastors have been blinded by the retreats. "Their focus is no longer on the gospel or evangelism, rather the experiences they've had."

Mason noted that the Cursillo movement does good work. "However," he said, "There are points at which Cursillo and Southern Baptists clash. Let me stress that before any member of a Southern Baptist church goes to a Cursillo, the pastor needs to go first."



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



GA's of First Church, Rolling Fork, had a Christmas "make-it, take-it" workshop. They made items and delivered them to shut-ins.

Wesson Church, Wesson, will host a Wild Game Supper in the church gym from 6-8 p.m. on Jan. 17. Mike Carr is pastor of Wesson Church. For more information, call the church at (601) 643-5722.

The 9th annual Kingdom Anointing Conference, formerly the Greater Gulf Coast Bible Conference, will be held Jan. 30-Feb. 3 at Pass Road Church, Gulfport. The times are 9:15 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 7 p.m. Sunday; morning services at 9 a.m., 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., Mon.-Wed.; and 7 p.m. each night through Thurs. The speakers are Ron Phillips, Jack Taylor, Peter Lord, Dudley Hall, Paul Tsika, and Wade Trimmer. Lunch and dinner will be served each day. For more information, call the church office at (228) 863-1697. Edgar Jackson is pastor.



Acteons of First Church of Byram decorated the Ronald McDonald house for Christmas. Pictured (from left) are Carman Byrd, Sarah Catherine White, Lindsey Carpenter, Tabitha Walker, and Erin Floyd; (back row) Sue Malone, Pat White, Melitta Walker, and Mandy Walker, advisors; Jessica Massingill and Brenda Lewis.



RA's of First Church, Coldwater, recently had a Moon walk for the annual Lottie Moon Missions Offering. The boys raised \$600 toward the goal of \$11,000. RA leaders are Steve Luttrell, Joe Deluca, Derrell Hart, and Gaston McCormick.

Celebrate Peace Conference, sponsored by Rankin Association WMU, will be held on Jan. 15 at First Church, Pearl, from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Conference speakers are Gloria Thurman, retired missionary to Bangladesh; Ann Brumfield, prayer ministry consultant; and Mary Ann Parke, women's ministries director, Morrison Heights Church, Clinton. There will be a complimentary luncheon. For more information, contact Sharon Brewer at Rankin Association at 939-2182 or Margaret King at 829-2704. Allen H. Stephens is director of missions of Rankin County Association.

Collierville, Tenn., has participated in several Christian ministries. She was director of a Mother's Heart at Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tenn., for three years and taught evening Bible study at this church. She authored "Mentoring a Mirrored Heart," a 20 week faith mentoring Bible study. For more information, call the church at (662) 226-3661.

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Romanian-American Mission Banquet will be held at First Church, Brandon, 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 28. For more information, contact Wayne Ball at (601) 825-9003.

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The Fishermen, a singing group of the Mississippi State Baptist Student Union, is available for worship services, youth activities, retreats, and banquets. Members pictured (from left) are Annah Mary Dowdle, Jerry Studdard, Sissy Wilkerson, Grant Alford, Debra Nugent, Jeremy Lokits, Farrah Deese, and Stewart Cannon. For more information, contact MSU-BSU, Box BU, Mississippi State, MS 39762, (601) 323-5761, or e-mail: bsu@ra.mstate.edu.

### MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

**NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH** - Branch Rd., Florence, MS 39073. Searching for full-time associate pastor with emphasis in youth, activities, and pastoral care ministries. Mail resume to Johnny Sykes, 2404 New Sight Dr., Brookhaven, MS 39601.

**NEEDED: FULL-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY.** Some experience working with computers including word processing is needed. For further information, please send resume to the Personnel Committee, Daniel Memorial Baptist Church, 3784 Terry Rd., Jackson, MS 39212. Telephone (601) 376-4100.

**PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR/MINISTER OF MUSIC.** Send resume to Clear Branch Baptist Church, 276 Clear

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 13, 2000

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.



## Christian Performing Arts Festival

with Church Recreation and Youth Leader Conferences

March 24-25, 2000  
First Baptist Church  
Brandon • Cost \$25

For more information, contact  
Discipleship & Family Ministry Department  
(601)968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651



Life is not made up of  
the things we own.  
Luke 12:15

## 2 great dates for OLDER CHILDREN'S RETREATS 2000

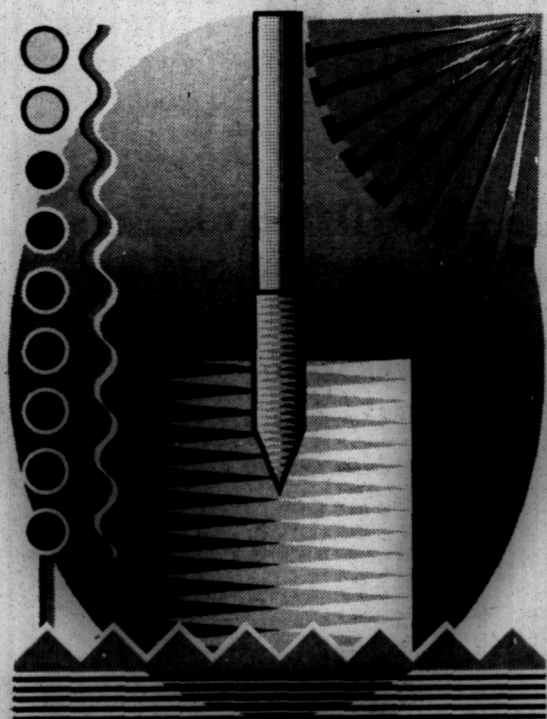
(completed grades 4-6)

July 6-8  
Central Hills  
Baptist Retreat  
Kosciusko  
Cost: \$80

July 20-22  
Gulfshore  
Baptist Assembly  
Pass Christian  
Cost: \$78

• Worship • Bible Study  
• Track Time • Church Talent Show

Thursday 1:30 p.m. - Saturday noon  
Sponsored by the Sunday School Department  
For info call us at 1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800



## Sunday School Growth Conference 2000

Tuesday  
February 22  
9 a.m. - noon  
FBC, Starkville



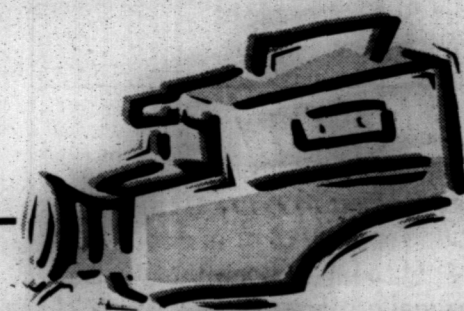
### Conference Leader:

Daniel Edmonds, Growth Consultant for the Alabama Baptist State Convention, Montgomery, Ala.

This conference will assist you in planning:

- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Prospects
- Teaching Units
- Ministry Touches
- Space
- Workers
- Training
- SS Leadership Meetings
- Worship Attendance
- Offerings
- Baptisms

Sponsored by the Sunday School Department, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
Need more information? Call us at 1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800



## Witnessing Through Media Awards

Sponsored by the Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting organization, the 2000 Witnessing Through Media Awards program has been created to recognize radio and video productions which demonstrate excellence in message design and production in helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. If your church is involved in a radio or video production in the following time frame (March 1, 1999 - March 1, 2000), why not think of entering this year's awards program. We have had some outstanding creative work done by Mississippi churches in the past and I know this year will be no exception, says Farrell Blankenship, director, Department of Broadcast Services. Contact his office for an entry form or additional information. Entry deadline is March 15, 2000.



# LIFT HIGH THE CROSS

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 21-22, 2000

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Madison  
Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson

### Featuring:

Junior Hill	Ken Smith
Steve & Becky Carver	Greg O'Neal
P.J. Scott	Phil Roberts
Jerry Pipes	Bill Britton
Ken Weathersby	Graham Smith

**"God For Us"**  
January 22, 2 p.m.  
Mississippi  
Coliseum

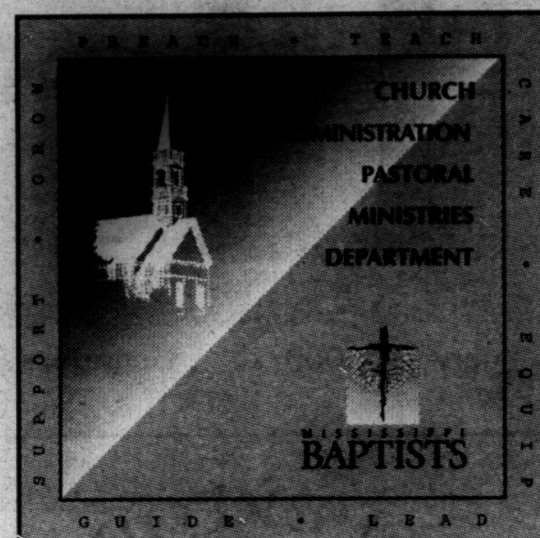
Sponsored by the Evangelism Department.  
For more information, call 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

## CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE

February 3, 2000  
First Baptist Church, Madison

*We Can't Administer What We  
Don't Have*  
*We Must Administer Rightly  
What We Do Have*

Theme: Administration and Leadership  
of Financial Resources



**Purpose:** To provide information and challenge to church leaders on the administration, leadership, and resources of church finances with a biblical basis being strongly emphasized.

**Target Audience:** Pastors, administrators, treasurers, financial committees, deacons, trustees

**Registration Fee:** \$10 (includes lunch at the church)

Sponsored by:  
Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, MBCB  
Metro Baptist Association, Jackson  
Stewardship and Cooperative Program Department, MBCB

Call 601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651 for more information.

## Start a Revolution SINGLE ADULT CONFERENCE

**Ken Brumley**  
Single Adult Minister  
Green Acres Baptist Church  
Tyler, Texas

**Jamie Baker & John Agnew**  
in concert Saturday night  
Harrisburg BC, Tupelo

**Friday & Saturday**  
**February 4 & 5**  
**FBC, Tupelo**  
(Sat. night concert  
Harrisburg  
Baptist Church)

Conference includes  
choice of two tracks  
for singles, each with  
three 1 1/2 hour  
sessions.

### Cost for the conferences:

Early Bird Registration (by 1/15)	\$20
Registration after 1/15 or at door	\$30
Friday Night Meal (optional)	\$5
Track 1 (cost of book)	\$8

For more information or to receive brochures and registration forms please contact Tim Alexander by telephone at 662-842-6917 or by mail at 1800 W. Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38801.

## SINGLE WOW WEEKEND

with Doug Dees and music team,  
SELAH from Nashville  
(Call 601-544-1794)

**Feb. 4 & 5**  
**Temple BC**  
**Hattiesburg**

Sponsored by  
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department

## Single Adult Regional Rallies

(\$5 at the door)

**January 21**  
**(Friday)**

**Lake Tiak O'Khata**  
**Louisville**

7:00-10:00 p.m.  
with bonfire

Call (601)773-7853  
for lodging reservations.

**January 22**  
**(Saturday)**

**Ray's Camp, Brookhaven**

2:00-5:00 p.m.  
with bonfire

Brookhaven Exit to Hwy 515  
about two miles on right.

For directions, call  
(601)833-8363.

## Conferences

- **Square Peg in Round Hole** by Renee Scheidt with humor about finding your place as a single in today's world
- **Journey to One** by Gwen Williams
- **Leadership** by Larry Garner, Jackson, Metro Association, a writer/lecturer on Singles Ministries

Sponsored by  
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department  
Glenn Shows, Singles Consultant  
For more information call (601) 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651



## YOUTH BIBLE STUDY FORUM

**Saturday, February 5, 2000**  
**Ridgecrest Baptist**  
**Church, Madison**

**8:30-11:30 AM**

**A CHANCE FOR FOUR  
OF YOUR YOUTH TO SHARE  
THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT  
SUNDAY SCHOOL!**

**OUR CHANCE TO HEAR WHAT  
YOUTH ARE SAYING!**

Bring **FOUR** of your youth (grades 7-12) to this unique Forum and give them an opportunity to share. As you select the **FOUR** to bring, choose a mixture of male and female and a mixture of older youth and younger youth. Also, consider including one who is only "fringely" active.

Why only **FOUR**, you may ask? That's a fair question. The reason is that we want to generate meaningful, honest, open, and "serious" discussion. The smaller the number, we feel, the easier this will be to accomplish. Your youth will be able to voice their thoughts and feelings about several areas of Sunday School.

There is no charge to participate in this Forum. **HOWEVER, WE DO ASK THAT YOU PRE-REGISTER WITH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BY MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2000.** Complete the form below and return by Monday, January 31, 2000.

Feel free to contact Mark Lott if you need more information, 1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800, ext. 295.

COMPLETE AND RETURN BY MONDAY  
JANUARY 31, 2000 TO:  
SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT  
P.O. BOX 530  
JACKSON, MS 39205

CHURCH NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
CHURCH PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
CHURCH ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON'S NAME COMPLETING FORM \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE OF PERSON COMPLETING FORM \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF ADULTS ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_  
NAMES, AGES, AND SCHOOL GRADES OF  
YOUTH ATTENDING:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



## Church Weekday Education Clinics 2000

*February 19, Highland BC, Meridian*  
*March 18, FBC, Jackson*

For more info call:

Don Hicks  
Discipleship and Family Ministry  
968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651

Susie McNair  
Clinic Coordinator  
(601)932-6052



## SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR A NEW CENTURY CURRICULUM WORKSHOPS

Sunday School for a New Century will involve releasing new Bible study curriculum choices (available from the Fall 2000 Quarter) designed to assist churches as they seek to see more lives transformed through the gospel. Through these series of workshops we will interpret and help prepare your church for these exciting changes. This conference is for pastors, staff, Sunday School directors, and key age group leadership.

Dates	Sponsoring Association/s	Location	Time
1/24	Gulf Coast	Gulf Coast Associational Center, Gulfport	7:00-9:00 PM
1/24	Lebanon	Carterville Baptist Church, Petal	6:30-8:30 PM
1/25	Neshoba	Neshoba Baptist Center, Philadelphia	7:00-9:00 PM
1/31	North Central & Yalobusha	Friendship Baptist Church, Grenada	7:00-8:30 PM
1/31	Tri-County	Tri-County Assn. Office, Columbia	7:00-9:00 PM
2/1	Covington-Jeff Davis	Covington-Jeff Davis Associational Center, Collins	7:00-9:00 PM
2/1	George-Greene	FBC, Leakesville	7:00-9:00 PM
2/3	Simpson	Simpson Associational Office, Mendenhall	7:00-9:00 PM
2/3	Wayne	Overstreet's Catfish House, Waynesboro	6:30-8:30 PM
2/17	Adams-Union & Franklin	FBC, Natchez	7:00-9:00 PM
2/21	Calhoun & Webster	Calhoun Associational Center, Calhoun City	7:00-8:30 PM
2/22	Tishomingo	Tishomingo Baptist Church, Tishomingo	7:00-9:00 PM
2/28	Carroll-Montgomery	FBC, Winona	7:00-9:00 PM
2/29	Mississippi	East Fork Baptist Church, Smithdale	7:00-8:30 PM
3/2	Monroe	Monroe Baptist Associational Office, Becker	6:30-8:30 PM
3/14	Newton	Conehatta Baptist Church, Conehatta	7:00-9:00 PM
3/16	Prentiss & Alcorn	Gaston Baptist Church, Booneville	7:00-9:00 PM
3/16	Leake	West Carthage Baptist Church, Carthage	7:00-9:00 PM
3/18	Lee & Itawamba	West Jackson St. Baptist Church, Tupelo	9:30-11:30 AM
3/20	Lauderdale	Westwood Baptist Church, Meridian	7:00-9:00 PM
3/21	Lincoln & Franklin	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Brookhaven	7:00-9:00 PM
3/23	Golden Triangle	West End Baptist Church, West Point	7:00-8:30 PM
3/23	Northwest & Panola	FBC, Senatobia	6:30-8:30 PM
3/27	Pike	N. McComb, McComb	6:30-8:00 PM
3/27	Washington	Washington Associational Office, Greenville	7:00-9:00 PM
4/14-15	State S S Dept.	Park Place Baptist Church, Brandon	5:00 PM - 14th Noon - 15th
5/02	Jackson	FBC, Gautier	6:30-8:30 PM

For more information, call the State Sunday School Department.  
1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800



## Pray this day for...

January 14-27, 2000

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

*Jesus' Promise To Answer Prayer - "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." John 15:7*

*Jesus prefaced the promise with two conditions. If you remain in Me, and if My words remain in you, then (and only then) you'll receive whatever you ask for.*

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (Christian Action Commission and Sunday School Emphasis) Abortion on demand takes the lives of 1.5 million babies each year in the United States. Pray for and support the unborn, women considering abortion, the abused, and the elderly.

Baptist Men's Day (Men's Ministry Emphasis), A.J. Perrin is a Messenger of the Word pastoring Valentine Baptist Mission in Cut Off, L.A. Pray for members as they search for property to purchase.

The Guarani team in Paraguay ask us to pray for the building of a new church. About 40 have been meeting to worship, and one member has donated land for the church. Ask the Lord to provide all that is needed for this church to be completed.

For Vocal, Conducting, Instrumental Festivals (Church Music), Explosive growth in housed churches is outpacing their ability to disciple the new converts in China. Pray that large churches and itinerant teachers will be able to train more people to be leaders.

Beth Oakley, missionary in Benin writes, "A 15-minute weekly radio broadcast of Bible stories and music in the Mahi language will begin in January. The pastor who will present the Bible stories has been sick. Pray that God will heal him so he can broadcast these messages.

Missionaries Spencer and Leslie Stith ask you to pray that God will call out workers for Bulgaria. This former Communist country is developing a materialistic mindset of the West, decreasing their openness to the gospel.

A teacher at a school in the Gambia said that the prayer-walkers from America had a great impact on his life. He couldn't stop thinking about those who would travel so far to pray. He decided he wanted that kind of faith. Praise the Lord!

Baptist representatives ministering in Thailand's numerous prisons write: Just in the past three weeks, over 90 prisoners have accepted Christ. Pray that a great revival will sweep the hundreds of thousands of prisoners in Thailand so that God will be glorified.

For Area Vocal, Conducting, Instrumental Festival; North Oxford BC, Oxford (Church Music). Rafael Gutierrez, a Messenger of the Word in Sandy, Utah, asks prayer that the 1999-2000 year will be good for the church growth.

For (1) Area Keyboard Festival, Harrisburg BC, Fairview BC, Columbus/FBC, Brandon/FBC, Natchez/FBC, Laurel (Church Music), (2) Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association, Vicksburg (Mississippi Baptist Religious Education Association).

Life in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, is difficult, and jealousy destroys many relationships and churches. Pray that Christians would look beyond the tribal differences and have Christ-like love for one another.

For GA/Acteen Campus Day; William Carey College (WMU), Elizabeth Darrah is director of weekday ministries at Ocean View East Baptist Center, Norfolk, Va. Pray that hearts will be changed to do God's will and that hearts will be touched through weekday ministries.

For (1) Singles Regional Rally, (Discipleship & Family Ministry), (2) Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra Retreat (Church Music), (3) Evangelism Conference, Ridgecrest BC, Madison, 1:30 p.m., 21st-noon 22nd, then at Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson, 2 p.m.

For (1) "God For Us" Presentation, Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson (Witness Team), (2) Bivo Ministries/Ministers' Wives Luncheon (Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries), (3) Singles Regional Rally, (Discipleship & Family Ministry).

# VBS Jumpstart

February 15, 2000  
9 a.m. - noon

Alta Woods Baptist Church  
168 Colonial Drive, Jackson

Take the plunge into...the fantastic good news.  
Ocean Odyssey...  
diving into the depths of God's faithfulness.

For all pastors, VBS directors,  
VBS leaders to explore  
an overview of the 2000 theme, Ocean Odyssey



The VBS Scuba  
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children.com  
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May 5-6, 2000  
Colonial Heights  
Baptist Church  
Jackson, Mississippi

children.com



Preschool/Children's leadership festival planned for all Christian leaders who work with, teach, or lead children from birth through 6th grade. The conference will begin with registration at 3 p.m., Friday, May 5, 2000, at Colonial Heights Baptist Church in Jackson. There will be early bird conferences at 3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00 Friday afternoon.

Donna Bowman will be the keynote speaker for the weekend. Miss Bowman will speak Friday night after the Lap Top Meal @ down time.Diner. Donna is a childhood religious education professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Following Miss Bowman's keynote address there will be demonstration booths in favorite places @ children.com (located in the Colonial Heights Baptist Church gym from 8-9 p.m.).

Saturday morning, May 6th, children.com will offer four more conference hours with 6-8 choices most hours. Specific conferences will be offered for Sunday School leaders, Discipleship Training teachers, Missions teachers, Extended Care teachers, TeamKID coaches, Bible Buddies teachers, and Bible Drill leaders.

Cost for any or all of the six conferences, Favorite Places (demonstration booths), Lap Top Meal @ down time.Diner, and registration is \$10 per person due with the pre-registration form. Deadline for pre-registration and fees is April 24, 2000.

Sponsored by the Sunday School Department  
For more info call us at 1-800-748-1651 or (601)968-3800

# HOUSE TOPS



## NAMES IN THE NEWS



Wicker, J. Culpepper, and K. Culpepper

James Culpepper was ordained to the ministry by Sallis Church, Attala Association, on Nov. 7. Kenneth Culpepper, brother of the candidate, brought the charge. Thomas Wicker, pastor, brought the charge to the church. A Bible from the church was presented to Culpepper by Jack Ables, chairman of deacons. West Church, West, has called Culpepper as pastor and he is presently serving the church. Pictured (from left) are Wicker, James Culpepper, and Kenneth Culpepper.

Agricola Church, Agricola, ordained Mark J. Vincent to the ministry on Nov. 21. He is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and is currently pastor of Oak Grove Church, Burleson, Texas. Eddie Davidson, former pastor of Vincent, originally from Stonewall, presently pastor of

First Church, Hamilton, Ala., brought the message for the ordination service. Pictured (from left) are Vincent and Davidson.

Dianne Carruth (left), pianist, and Margaret Adams (right),



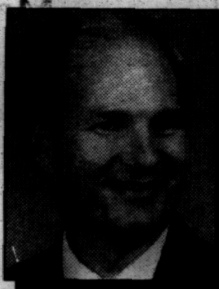
Vincent and Davidson

organist, were recently recognized by Mars Hill Church, Amite County, for 25 years of service as instrumentalists. They received monetary gifts and a dozen red roses from the church and scrapbooks containing letters of appreciation from church members.

Writer's Digest recently released its winners for the 1999

Writer's Digest Writing Competition. Danny Von Kanel, minister of music/senior adults at Liberty Church, Liberty, placed 10th in the feature article category for his article, "Rainy Days and Mondays," (How to Make the Most of what Comes After Sunday).

Rainy Days and Mondays is about what happens after a spiritual high on Sundays and how to avoid spiritual lows the next day.



Von Kanel



Carruth and Adams

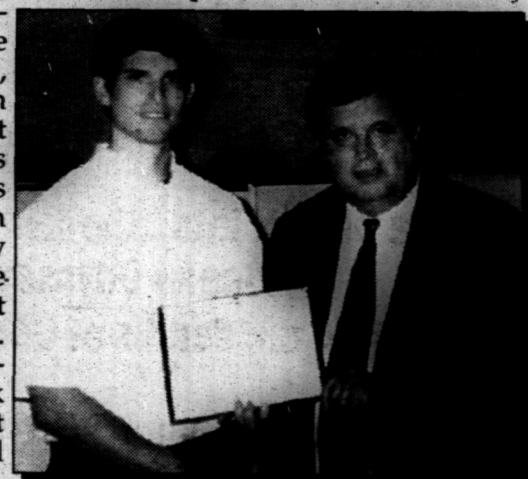


Ordination service at Beulah Church, Union County

Beulah Church, Union County, ordained Ken White to the ministry on Nov. 14. He was called as pastor of Beulah Church on Sept. 5. Pictured (from left) are David Thomas, pastor of Shiloh Church, Lafayette County; Ronnie Mayes, professor of Evangelism at Mid-America Seminary, delivered the message to the church; White; David Ard, pastor of

Olivet Church, Little Rock, Ark., delivered the message to the minister; and Marvin Cox, director of missions in Union County, was moderator of the services.

Jonathan Sharp was licensed to the gospel ministry by Harpersville Church, Harpersville, on Nov. 21. A student at New Orleans Seminary, Sharp is involved in Hispanic Discovery Project through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. He also does voluntary mission work through First International Church in Gulfport. Pictured with him is his father, John Sharp, pastor of Harpersville Church.



Jonathan and John Sharp

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But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." - Jude 1:9

**Michael's Watch** is a support group whose sole purpose and mission is to offer emotional, mental, and spiritual support for those whose lives have been affected by family members or loved ones involved in the homosexual lifestyle.

**Michael's Watch Group** meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Additional information may be obtained by calling **First Baptist Church in Louisville, Mississippi** at (662) 773-6246.

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**By Karen Simmons, member  
First Church, Gulfport**

**By Karen Simmons, member**  
*First Church, Gulfport*

In its 103-year history, First Church, Gulfport, had never given more than \$38,000 for international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO).



**NOVEL FUND RAISER** — Gulfport neighbors (from left) Dean Holleman, Allie Peden, Hollis Holleman, Bill Peden, and Sarah Gant Holleman inspect the objects of their mothers' unorthodox fund raising campaign for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. The "Lottie Pottie" campaign helped First Church, Gulfport, set a record for gifts to the missions offering. (Photo courtesy of The Sun-Herald-James Edward Bates)

For that reason alone, a goal of \$50,000 could be considered a significant challenge. For the church to raise over \$100,000 would be miraculous.

Senior pastor Chuck Register, who accepted a call to pastor First Church in September 1999, never discounted what God could lead people to do in the name of evangelism and world missions.

Register, who began an interim pastorate at First, Gulfport in April 1999, challenged the church with an LMCO goal of \$50,000 during the summer.

At the conclusion of a message on the Parable of the Talents, Register gave each family \$10. The "talents" were to be used as seed money to fund projects to raise money for LMCO.

The church responded with a variety of activities and projects that included luncheons, auctions, craft sales, and special events. Members expressed their creativity as diverse approaches were utilized to reach the goal.

One member invested his funds in the stock market and turned \$10 into nearly \$4500 while another created the "Lottie Pottie," a gold painted toilet placed in the yards of church members to be removed for a nominal "fee," with all proceeds going toward the missions offering.

The Lottie Pottie alone raised nearly \$12,000, including \$3,000 from a Jackson couple who read about the fund raiser in The Baptist Record and desired to be a part of what God was doing in Gulfport.

"There was a constant buzz in the church about the goal," said member

Brigham Young. "The excitement and passion spilled over into all aspects of the church."

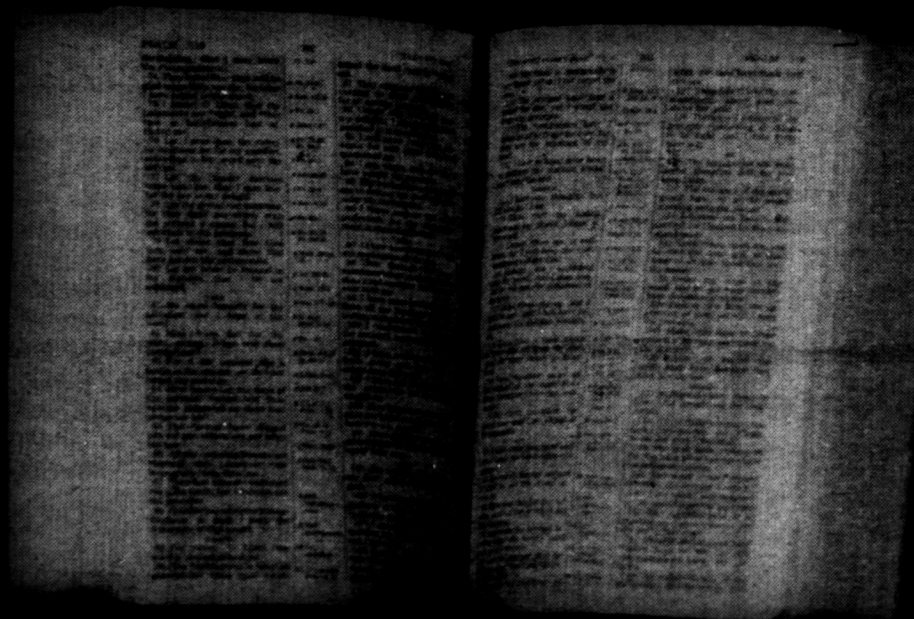
"The staff speculated that 70,000-75,000 dollars was possible," said pastoral intern Israel Cox, a student at nearby New Orleans Seminary, "but during our prayer times, we continued to ask God to do something that we could point to and say, 'We didn't do that. Only God could do that.'"

God provided his answer on December 19. As the church celebrated the Great Commission with a Parade of Flags; testimonies from Southern Baptist missionaries serving in India, Argentina, and the Ukraine; and a message challenging members to missions action, nearly 1,000 worshipers participated in a "March to the Manger," placing their gifts and talent monies in mangers at the front of the worship center.

During the march, \$132,000 was given to LMCO — and to date the offering has swelled to \$137,748.00.

"First Family, you have done well this morning," said Register, adding, "In the previous months, you have prayed for this day and worked toward this day. You have been faithful in giving in a sacrificial manner, but praying and giving are simply not enough.

"It is now time for us to go. In order to fulfill the Great Commission we must be more than people willing to pray, work, and give. We must be people willing to go to the ends of the earth with the Gospel of Christ."



Dr. Adrian Rogers, Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_ JANU

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## PRAISE FOR CHURCH

Editor:

I am a member of Sardis Church. I would like for the church to know how much I appreciate all that they have done for me since I began my time there.

Sardis Church members, you do not know how much you mean to me. Since I started church there you made me feel at home. You helped me in my walk to meet Jesus. Thanks to you I accepted Jesus when I was 15 years old.

Sardis had so much love and was filled with the spirit of God and still does. I knew that God was speaking to me through you. Then when I was 16 years old you showed me the love of a Christian family when I made a great decision for the Lord, to preach the Gospel of Christ.

Now I am 17 and you have been there for me through my whole ministry. There is a man that I cannot leave out, Stanley Barnett. He served as interim pastor when I surrendered to preach. He has helped me throughout my ministry for the Lord.

May God bless you. I love Sardis and all its members.  
Leavy E. Shofner, Jr.  
Philadelphia

## EXHAUSTING SEASON

Editor:

Your lead editorial of December 23 entitled "Taking Back the 'Holiday Season'" struck a resonant chord in

my heart. Your mention of a mechanical Santa Claus dressed in red flannel in a storefront window to the tune of Jingle Bell Rock exactly hit the mark, but it didn't begin the first week in October; it began in August here in Columbus! - and Bing Crosby was singing "Its beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go" on TV in August!

It is now only a few days past the "Season." I'm exhausted.

George Y. Steel  
Columbus

## THANKS FOR CAR USE

Editor:

We would like to express our appreciation to a fairly new organization in Mississippi that provides an extremely helpful service to missionaries — the Macedonian Call Foundation that provides the use of a car to missionaries on home assignment, or in our case, on vacation in the States. We came home for the wedding of our son and travel was made so much more pleasant and uncomplicated by the use of a car that was loaned

to us during this time.

Many Mississippians may not realize that the donation of their used car can be counted as a tax deduction. If any of your readers are interested in the program, they can contact Tom Hearon at (601) 956-7770.

Once again, Mississippians prove that missions is important to them and they go beyond the call of duty to care for their missionaries. We thank you!

Russell and Melinda Kyzar  
IMB missionaries  
Moscow, Russia

# NOBTS holds Dec. commencement

NEW ORLEANS, La. (Special) — Three students with Mississippi ties received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) during commencement exercises on Dec. 17. Standing (from left) with Charles S. Kelley Jr., president of NOBTS, right center, is Brent N. Bozeman of Brandon, pastor of Union Church, Brandon, doctor of philosophy degree; Terry Wayne Booth of Laurel, pastor of Amite Church, Denham Springs, La., doctor of ministry degree; and Stanley Alan Wafler of Memphis, Tenn., pastor of Drew Church, Drew, doctor of philosophy degree.

Receiving master of divinity degrees were Tony Beazley from Crystal Springs, pastor of Ridgeway Church, Vicksburg; Trenton W. Bilbo from Clinton, pastor of Union Church, Church, Union Church; Joel "Kent" Busbee from Meridian;

Terry Michael Carney, Jr., from Hattiesburg; Keith Dendy from Woodland, pastor of Glendale Church, Leland; Barry L. Kendrick from Newnan, Ga., married to the former Stephanie Russum of Brandon; Jerry W. Owens from Florence; Steven Earl Parten from Pearl, minister to students and education at Cleary Church, Florence; Jeffrey J. Rankin from Pascagoula; Chris E. Vowell from Newton, pastor of New Bethel Church, Philadelphia; and Felix Martin Wilson from Jackson, pastor of Bethesda Church, Terry.

Receiving the master of arts were Melanie Beavers Roudkovski of Springhill, La., minister to youth and children at Olive Church, Lumberton; Chris Thomas from Hattiesburg, youth minister at Maranatha Church in Mize/Mt. Olive; Oren Reid Vance from Canton, Melissa Ann Peden from Ellisville; Timothy Daniel Lee from Biloxi, minister of students and education at Big Ridge Church, Biloxi; Lee Ann Maniscalco from Ocean

Springs; Glenn A. Jackson from Purvis; and Stephanie Michelle Brown from Jackson.

Randall Broome from Sumrall, president of World Evangelism, Inc., in Chalmette, La.; received the master of theology degree.

Joey Barnard from Port Sulphur, La., pastor of Crosby Church, Crosby, and Daniel Allen Lee from Petal, received the bachelor of general studies degree.

Rob Westbrook from Amory, pastor of Hebron Church, Amite County, received the bachelor of arts degree in pastoral ministries.

Danny Clay from Meridian, music minister of Macedonia Church, Suqualena, received the certificate in church music.

Dorothy "Page" Hughes from Clinton, received the women's ministry certificate.

## Carl Bates, 85, dies of cancer

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. (BP) — Mississippi native Carl E. Bates, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and two state Baptist conventions, died at home during the evening of Dec. 21 to fast-moving cancer diagnosed earlier in the month. Bates, of Horse Shoe, N.C., was 85.

A native of Liberty, who was baptized at age 19 at First Church, Summit, Bates earned an undergraduate degree from Mississippi College and, in 1941, a theology degree from Southern Seminary.

In the SBC, Bates was president of the Pastors' Conference in 1962; a two-term member of the former Home Mission Board; and a member of the Baptist World Alliance's General Council.



Bozeman, Booth, Kelley, and Wafler

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## Mississippian graduates at SEBTS

James Howard Conner of Smithdale received the Master of Divinity with Christian Education degree from Southeastern Seminary (SEBTS), Wake Forest, N.C., on Dec. 18.

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## LIFE AND WORK

### Life to treasure

Ps. 31:13-16; Jer. 7:3-7; John 3:15-16; 10:10;  
1 Timothy 4:7-8

By Michael Jones

"What should I do with my life?" As a student minister, I have heard this question many times from students about to graduate from high school and college. It is an important question that we all should ask ourselves. Whether a student graduating from high school or a senior citizen having been retired for years, "What should I do with my life?" is a question that must be asked.

The Bible is the best place I know to search for the answer to this question. God's word gives us direction that we all can use

to help answer this question no matter what our age.

**Value your life (Ps. 139:13-16).** This passage beautifully describes the value our life has. It states: "You knit me together in my mother's womb," "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," and "All the days ordained for me...before one of them came to be." God values our life so much that he takes a personal interest in creating each and every one of us. He shapes us in our mother's womb and even knows our future before we are born. God values not only in our conception, but also the rest of our lives.



Jones

Because of the worth God places on our lives, we too should value life, others and ours. The application for this in a Christian's life is far reaching — both spiritual and physical.

**Receive new life (John 3:15-16; 10:10).** God sent Jesus to us so that we might receive life — full and abundant life. This is the ultimate statement of God's value he places on each of our lives. He values each of us so much that he would make it possible for us to have a full life at the price of sending his son to die for us. As a result of this ultimate sacrifice, there should be no question in our minds of the value God places on our lives.

**Take care of yourself (1 Tim. 4:7-8).** One application we need to make from the value which God places on our lives is that we need to take responsibility

in taking care of ourselves. First and for most, we must take personal responsibility for our spiritual health. This "has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." We have a responsibility in practicing spiritual exercise to develop and care for our human life. This is the most important care we can give ourselves. We must not, however, overlook our physical health. God is indeed more concerned about our spiritual well-being but he is also concerned about our physical well-being. We have a responsibility for our physical health: to take care, physically, of this creation God has made and values.

**Protect others' lives (Jer. 7:3-7).** In this passage, the spiritual and the physical applications of valuing life come together. The people of Judah weren't worshipping God, they were worshipping the temple and taking

advantage of people. Jeremiah called for a revival — the spiritual, which would be evident in the way they treated others — the physical.

As a result of the value God places on life, we also have the responsibility to help and protect others, especially those who are most vulnerable. Just as with the people of Judah, the way we treat others, which is physical, will reveal the value we actually place on life, which comes from the spiritual.

"What should I do with my life?" From the scriptures above, it is clear God desires us to value it. This involves receiving the full and abundant life in Christ, taking responsibility for both our spiritual and physical life, as well as helping and protecting others' lives. What are you doing with your life?

Jones is associate pastor/youth minister at Monticello Church, Monticello.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Protecting life

Gen. 1:27-28a; Ps. 139:13-15; Matt. 18:10

By Carl M. White

As I have grown older, and hopefully wiser, God has granted me the opportunity to see and understand the other side of some issues I feel passionate about. In my early days of ministry, I was pro-life, that's it, end of discussion. Now, 20 years later, I am still pro-life, but let's sit down and talk about it. I have known too many situations where an abortion appears to have provided a simple solution.

Yet, life has also taught me that simple solutions often are not what they seem, especially if that solution involves transgressing a major value of God. Our Creator values human life above

all other forms of life, and so should we. There are good theological reasons why.

**Created in God's image (Gen. 1:27-28a).** For a millennium mankind has questioned what does it mean that humanity was created in the image of God. Some say it has to do with the immortal nature of the soul. Others say it has to do with moral reasoning. However you might answer the question, this much seems sure. In creation, God gave to humanity a God-likeness, and this reality separates human beings from the rest of the created order. It gives human beings a higher value in the eyes of God.



White

Reproduction is a blessing of God, Genesis 1:28 says so. God blessed the first man and woman and said be fruitful, multiply. How can we treat what is a blessing from God as if it is a curse? A problem pregnancy is a problem because we make it so. God conceived reproduction as a blessing.

Anyone who has held a new born baby understands this. Strangely, even in case of problem pregnancies, the birth of the baby becomes a cause for rejoicing.

**Divinely woven in the womb (Ps. 139:13-15).** The 139th Psalm begins with the great parenthesis, as verse five says, "Thou hast enclosed me from behind and before." God's hands form a parenthesis around our lives, from beginning to end.

What does the Bible consider

to be the beginning of life? Those who argue in favor of abortion say birth is the beginning. Psalm 139 indicates otherwise. Verses 13-15 clearly teach that the beginning point for God's parentheticals around our life is not birth, but conception. Even the secret places of the womb where a human life is formed are not secret from God.

Poetically, these are some of the more splendid words in scripture related to the wonder and beauty of humanity. The sheer beauty of them alone point to God's high regard for human life.

**Jesus loves the little children (Matt. 18:10, 14; 19:13-15).** Finally, our Lord Jesus himself placed a high value on children. The evidence for this is found in these passages in the Gospel according to Matthew.

First, Matthew reports that the Lord commanded us to never despise children. When the life of a newly conceived

child is considered an option to throw away or keep like the clothes off the rack at Wal Mart, that child's life is being despised.

In an interview, the late Mother Teresa was once asked if she believed the culture of the West was beyond redemption. In response she said that when a mother will kill her own child, what is left of that culture to redeem?

Second, Matthew reports that our Lord had a special place in the Kingdom of God for children, and that he desired that children be allowed access to him.

As Christian stewards, we must build a society that allows God's will to be fulfilled. We must give every child — from the point of conception forward — the right to life, and the opportunity to come to Jesus.

White is a member of First Church, Clinton.

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Focus on compassion

Matthew 9:18-31, 35-36

By Lynn Jones

A Sunday School teacher encouraged his class of fifth-grade boys to memorize one verse of Scripture during the week and recite it to the class the next Sunday. One of the boys worked on the verse, "Jesus went about doing good." The next Sunday his teacher called on him to quote the verse he had memorized. The boy said in a loud and confident voice, "Jesus went about looking good."

Unfortunately, that is the way many of us go about. We are more concerned about looking good than doing good. Jesus is concerned about more than looks. He is concerned about what we do.

In his own life he modeled the kind of compassion that should be seen in our lives. This chapter of Matthew focuses on this kind of compassion.

**Value of life (vv. 18-19, 23-26).** As Jesus was speaking to the disciples of John the Baptist, a certain ruler came to him. Mark's account of this incident reveals that the man was a "ruler of the synagogue" and that his name was Jairus (Mark 5:22). Jairus expressed great faith in Jesus. Even though his daughter had died, Jairus believed that Jesus could restore her to life.

Jesus immediately left his important meeting with John's disciples to go to the home of



Jones

Jairus. When Jesus arrived at Jairus' home, he discovered a scene of mourning, typical of that day. Professional mourners were helping the family grieve by playing their flutes and wailing loudly. In the midst of this scene of despair Jesus came to raise the girl to life.

We need to seize the opportunities we have for helping people who are in need. Jesus' heart was like a sensitive seismograph recording the shocks that people around him were experiencing. How sensitive are you?

**Value of chronically ill people (vv. 20-22).** While Jesus was on the way to the home of Jairus, he was approached by a woman who had suffered from the same disease for 12 years. You have to admire this woman. She had refused to give up hope in spite of many disappointments. Now she came to Jesus with faith that

he could do something about her problem. She expressed that faith by touching his garment as he passed by.

The woman was healed when she touched Jesus, but Jesus then stopped and talked to her. He wanted the crowd to know of her healing, and he wanted the woman to know that it was her faith that had restored her, not some magical power in his clothing.

Jesus was on his way to raise a girl from death when this happened. He valued this sick woman more than his own personal agenda. Are you willing to alter the crowded agendas of your life in order to minister to the needs of others?

**Value of blind people (vv. 27-31).** As Jesus left the home of Jairus, two blind men followed him crying for his help. When they responded to him in faith, Jesus healed them of their blindness.

Our compassion needs to extend to people with special

needs. All people need to know that someone loves them. You may be God's best hope of conveying that love to someone around you.

**Value of all people (vv. 35-36).** Jesus continued his ministry of preaching and healing all kinds of diseases. When he saw the large crowds that came out to him, he was moved with compassion for them. He saw them as sheep having no shepherd who genuinely cared for them. Jesus was different. In John 10:14, he declared, "I am the good shepherd." One of the ways that he demonstrated that was by showing compassion to all people.

People who have needs often get in our hair and on our nerves. What needs to happen is for us to be so controlled by the love of God that they get on our hearts. What is your response to the needs around you?

Jones is pastor of First Church, Booneville.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

### NOVEMBER 1-30, 1999 MEMORIALS

Mrs. Lillie Mae Polk  
Mrs. Lucile H. Hollingsworth  
Jason Powell  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Fulmer  
Mrs. Mildred Ramsey  
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Coats & Chris  
Mr. Robert Rankin  
Deborah SSC, FBC-Poplarville  
Elmer W. Ray  
Ms. Ann S. Danna  
Mike Rhew  
Mr. & Mrs. W. B. Cargill  
Rosalind Robbins  
Mrs. Hilda Cullen  
Mr. Carl Robison  
Mr. & Mrs. Alton L. Fields  
Mrs. Grace Robison  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy W. Owen Sr.  
Mrs. Evelyn Rogers  
Mr. & Mrs. Jess H. Dickinson  
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Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Nix  
Tom Hardy Russell  
Mr. & Mrs. E. K. Merritt  
Mr. Bobby Schultz  
Mr. & Mrs. Jess H. Dickinson  
Mrs. Maureen (Bob) Scott  
Mrs. Mabel T. McCullough  
Mr. Thomas Sessum  
Mr. & Mrs. Jess H. Dickinson  
Miss Gwen Shelton  
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh W. Douglas  
Charles W. Sherwood  
Mrs. Mary H. Sherwood  
Mr. James F. Shook  
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Coats & Chris  
John David Sims  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Garrett  
Dianne Slay  
Ulma Miles  
The James P. Shepherd Family  
Bertie Mae Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas  
Norsworthy  
Mrs. Alice B. Smith  
Mrs. W. C. Mangum  
Mrs. Henrietta Smith

Agnes, Beverly & Billy Pyron  
Joe Springer  
Mr. Glen Robertson  
Mrs. Pearl Stevens  
Mr. & Mrs. Jess H. Dickinson  
Mrs. Alice Stewart  
Mrs. Katie Kemp  
Mrs. Cecil Boswell  
Mrs. Elva Stewart  
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Z. L. Stinson  
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Mrs. Myrtis Valentour  
Mr. & Mrs. T. W. West  
Mrs. Evelyn Vann  
Mrs. Virginia B. Carpenter  
Mrs. Violet F. Taylor  
Mr. Herbert Webb  
Mrs. Dale P. Barr  
Mrs. Mary Elizabeth "Liz" Well  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter K. Poole  
Mrs. Warren Holladay Wells  
Miss Jean Graves  
Mr. Phillip West, Sr.  
B. H. S. Class of 1953  
Gladys Whiddon  
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Cascilla BC Ladies SSC  
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Mr. Carlton Wilder  
Mr. & Mrs. Rhen W. Pierce  
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael Garrett  
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*Thank you to all the individuals as well as churches who supported our children this Christmas season. You went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure each child had a*





# YouthLink events celebrate new millenium

ATLANTA (BP) — Satellite beams, heart-thumping music, and love for Jesus connected thousands of Southern Baptist teenagers coast-to-coast Dec. 29, as they kicked off YouthLink 2000, a millennial Christian celebration.



**CROSS OF CHRIST** — During the final session of YouthLink 2000 in Houston, the Cross took center stage in a procession of banners and worshippers. The celebration began at 8 p.m. and continued until well into the early hours of the next morning with worship and praise teams, speakers, skits and popular Christian band Caedmon's Call. (BP photo by Denise McGill)

The first-night attendance of approximately 41,000 at the seven sites was well under the 200,000 originally projected, largely because of concerns about the potential for disruptions caused by the "Y2K" computer bug. Several students who attended said they weren't worried.

"I know we're in God's hands. We're protected," said Jamie Freeman, a pastor's daughter from Los Angeles who plans to mark her 18th birthday at midnight Friday at the YouthLink celebration in Anaheim. "We're not worried about it," she said.

"It just brings God out of me," Kristin McGowen, 14, of Snow Hill, Maryland, said of the Philadelphia YouthLink. "I can fellowship with my friends, knowing that they're having as much fun as I am."

YouthLink 2000 was sponsored by four Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies — LifeWay Christian Resources, the International and North American mission boards, and Woman's Missionary Union — as well as state conventions affiliated with the SBC.

It began Wednesday night, Dec. 29 and stretched into the wee hours of Saturday morning, Jan. 1.

The celebration — which also will include student participation in local mission projects — attracted teens to conference centers and arenas in Anaheim, Calif.; Atlanta; Denver; Houston; Philadelphia; St. Louis; and Tampa, Fla.

They arrived in the regalia of their youth. They wore baggy pants and clumpy shoes, ball caps and ponytails, and, depending on the locale, heavy sweaters or tank tops and T-shirts.

They cheered, sang along and bounced-danced to ear-splitting, heart-pounding praise, and worship led by local as well as nationally known Christian rock bands. In some sites, they laughed with a sprinkling of Christian comedians. Although the scene was often reminiscent of a rock concert, the message was different.

"I absolutely believe that true life is giving your life to Jesus," recording artist Rebecca St. James, a native of Australia now living in Franklin, Tenn., told the more than 5,000 in Tampa.

"We need to take this conference as an opportunity to really get serious about our faith in God," she said.

St. James was one of several artists and speakers featured in YouthLink sessions at more than one location.

She and her band performed first in Tampa and left to catch a plane to Philadelphia where they would appear at the Thursday morning session there.

In Atlanta, the lead singer of Smalltown Poets observed how impressive it was that

the students were eager to express their faith in an often-frightening world. "You guys don't seem to be afraid, and that's cool," he said.

Teens in Philadelphia danced atop chairs and waved their arms in the air to the music of five brothers from American Samoa who sing as The Katinas.

"It's awesome to see young people coming to have fun and praising the Lord in Philadelphia," said Jesse Katina. "It's gotta' be fun to serve the Lord. It's exciting!"

While the students gathered in seven locations thousands of miles apart, satellite technology brought them together. It even focused them halfway around the world.

Standing in front of a television camera in Jerusalem, evangelist Jay Strack challenged the stateside-but-scattered audience to be "soldiers for Christ."

Strack's presentation began with a taped segment from Golgotha, "skull hill," outside the ancient walls of Jerusalem, where Roman soldiers crucified Jesus on a cross.

As a camera panned the location, Strack said, "This is the very spot where Jesus died for you."

When that segment ended, Strack stood under a dark Middle Eastern sky, telecasting live at 3 a.m. Jerusalem time.

"This isn't just a Sunday School story," Strack said of the crucifixion of Christ. "Jesus invaded time and space because God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him shall have everlasting life."

"That's not only life that goes on for eternity, but life that begins right now."

A "Global Link" segment also connected participants in each of the stateside sites to each other. For 30 minutes, they watched giant screens in each arena, seeing live action from each city.

They sang together as bands led praise music. They laughed together as comedians egged them on.

## Miami pastor killed by teen family had befriended

MIAMI (BP) — Miami Baptists were stunned by the Dec. 26, 1999, shooting death of H. Keith Blakley, pastor of the city's oldest Baptist church and a former employee of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Blakley, 47, pastor of Central Church, was shot at his home in Kendall, by John Erik Carter, 19, a former high school friend of Blakley's daughter, Angela, 19. He died at 4 p.m. Dec. 27 after being taken off life support at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

According to the Miami Herald, Carter walked past Blakley in the front yard of the pastor's home, entered the house and opened fire on Angela, his apparent target. She escaped the bullets and slipped out the back door, but her visiting grandparents, Frances and Billie Blakley, both 78, were wounded. They were reported to be recovering at the Jackson hospital.

Keith Blakley was hit when he rushed into the house after the first shots were fired. His wife, Theresa, 47, and younger children, Chelsea, 17, and Sean, 15, were not home at the time of the incident.

After the shootings, Carter reportedly went to the home of another former friend,

Jonathan Scarboro Lott, 19, about four miles away. He allegedly shot and killed Lott, whose body was found by his family at about 5 p.m.

At 11:45 p.m., Carter opened fire on two uniformed corrections officers outside the Miami-Dade County Jail, injuring Kimberly Richardson, 37. At 8:15 the following morning, Carter's body was found in the bathtub of a house under construction in Perrine, with an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. His car was found less than two blocks away with an explosive device stashed inside.

The Miami newspaper said the alleged gunman was a gifted but disturbed youth who previously had been in trouble with police for car theft, burglary, resisting arrest, probation violation, and firearms violations. He was under house arrest at the time of the Dec. 26 shooting spree.

The Blakley family had befriended Carter about three years ago and Keith and Theresa Blakley had attempted to counsel with him, the Herald noted. The family's last contact with Carter had been about a year ago, when he had called for Angela, who declined Carter's request to see him.

Theresa Blakley told the Herald she had no regrets about trying to help the troubled teen.

"I don't regret having let any soul into the fold of our family," the newspaper quoted her as saying. "It is our mandate from Christ to embrace every person and love them in the name of Jesus. That is what we are all about."

Tim Willis, Baptist student ministries director at Clemson (S.C.) University and a longtime friend of Blakley, told approximately 1,000 people gathered Dec. 30 for the pastor's funeral, "In the midst of a tragedy like this, there are many unanswered questions. Don't let the bitterness cripple you. Keith would not want that."

"Through all of this, we have seen God," Willis added. "We have experienced comfort we cannot explain. ... We have felt the hand of God."

David Cleeland, director of missions for Miami Baptist Association, spoke briefly during the funeral, emphasizing Blakley's role as a Christian in the community, his devotion to his family and his missionary heart.

Cleeland noted Blakley, who had served as a missionary in

Cape Town, South Africa, recently had organized a partnership between pastors in Miami and Cape Town. As pastor of Central Church, he was instrumental in starting and developing a ministry to the homeless. Sensitive to multicultural needs, he led the church in starting Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese language missions.

Others paying tribute to Blakley during the memorial service were Gene Whitehouse of St. Augustine, retired administrator at Central Church, and Al Fernandez, pastor of Jubilee Community Church in Miami and former associate pastor at Central.

Blakley was a graduate of the University of Texas, Arlington, and Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He earned his doctor of ministry degree from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

Before accepting the Miami pastorate, he served for several years as director of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Miami. Blakley had led Central since 1992. The church was founded July 26, 1896, two days before Miami itself was incorporated, the Herald noted.

### Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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HUG PF NHZG, YPFLFIJLF  
NHZG Z KUYJ XJK, YPHY  
UJ WHU EHU EJWF KUYJ  
WF, FTEFOY ZY RFLF  
CZQFU KUYJ PZW JI WX  
IHYPFL.

BJPU NZT: NZTYX-IZQF

Clue: K = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Twenty-One: Twenty-Seven.